



WEARE BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUDGET SUMMIT MEETING MINUTES

June 30, 2004

*****DRAFT*****

PRESENT: LAURA PETRAIN, CHAIRMAN; THOMAS REYNOLDS JR., SELECTMAN; HELEEN KURK, SELECTMAN.

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR: ROBERT CHRISTENSEN

RECORDING SECRETARY: SHERRY BUTT DUNHAM

BUDGET SUMMIT 7 P.M.

Chairman Petrain opened the summit by discussing the premise behind tonight's informal meeting. The main focus of these summits is to help the town pass an operating budget this coming year. Robert Christensen, the town administrative coordinator facilitated the summit.

Mr. Christensen said the forum for tonight's summit is a round table discussion on budget barriers—a brainstorming session where those in town government have freedom to speak openly.

TOPIC: Daily Needs of Specific Town Departments

- Plow truck driver
- Part time transfer station worker perhaps combine the position utilizing one person
- DPW secretarial needs
- CIP important
- New dwellings increase DPW expenses by \$110.00 per new dwelling
- DPW revenue up over last year
- Assessing / Building Office open late one night a week would help the department
- Financial implications of expanded hours?
- Inventory of deferred maintenance at town cemeteries. Inadequate funding in this area
- Cost of lawn care continues to rise, operating budget remains the same

- Assessment of cost efficiency
- Tree removal, fencing vs. limited funds
- \$10,000 to remove trees, impact on future budgets
- Part time position for Cable Department—15 to 20 hours a week
- Staffing issues with ZBA, Conservation, DPW and Planning
- Full time Land Use staff position
- Look into land use regulations and evaluate the impact current regulations have on the town's tax base
- Paid profession outsourcing for land use personnel
- Positive changes require investment
- Planning studies
- Legal budgetary increases need for addressing land use matters
- Money, money, money needed for Health & Welfare Department
- Welfare budget overruns
- Welfare budget has not increased in 9-years to keep-up with population growth
- Unable to secure welfare related services which do not cost the town money
- Welfare budget should increase by approximately \$5,000
- Failure to recognize with population growth comes an increase in welfare costs
- Towns cannot refuse welfare assistance due to budgetary constraints
- Transients are eligible for municipal welfare assistance per state & federal law
- Coordinate the financial needs so it does not unduly burden the taxpayer
- Lists like this need to become an absolute need list as opposed to wish list in an effort to gain voter trust
- Needs will be prioritized as this process progresses
- Weare Schools need more resources as the population grows
- Weare Middle School building needs replacing with new school building
- Overwhelming need for increase classroom space
- Special Education needs have increased in the area of services and out of district placements
- Attempting to reach NH Minimum Standards for education—cost per pupil lower than most NH schools
- Student / Teacher classroom ratios too high. School needs more teachers to resolve problem
- WMS 140 Students over capacity, CWES 40 Students over capacity
- Staffing at Weare School District needs increasing
- Improved communication between all entities, Stark, Weare School District and Town regarding budgetary needs
- Structured meetings between planning board and school boards a necessity
- Calculate how much of a financial impact new residents have on the community, each department should have these numbers
- Ongoing needs at Stark include school operating costs as a result of more student population: staff, supplies, support staff & special ed

- Stark has no major capital expenses looming in the near future
- Stark well replacement and some minor field development costs on the rise
- 2/3 Weare students at Stark and Henniker has 1/3—cost breakdown approximately the same ratio
- Health & safety of the public library
- Carpet problems, air quality problems at library
- No space for additional books at library
- 10,000 books short for recommendations for town library of this size, cannot add more due to space and weakness of 2nd floor
- Building maintenance shortfall and below state standards for public library
- Computer repair, software needs, no present allowance in the library operating budget
- Reference library needs updating. Weare Public Library currently using 1968 encyclopedias. To purchase a new set would require spending nearly the entire Library operating budget
- Library lacks large gathering space within their building
- The library needs a reasonable operating budget to serve the community adequately
- Radio replacements communication enhancements for fire department.
- Pagers and repeaters necessary for fire department
- Turn-out gear for firefighters
- Four vehicles necessary before 2010 for fire department.
- Supplemental insurance for fire personnel
- Increase fire department secretarial time and money to increase her salary
- Full time fire chief
- Academy fees for firefighters
- Clerical help in building office
- Replace building department vehicle
- An increase in the legal line for building department
- ZBA land use staffing needs on the rise
- Legal line must increase for ZBA & land use
- No approval for operating budgets, but continued services accommodated; this leaves the impression with voters that the town can get by on less
- Less warrant articles
- Finance department needs part-time office help
- Increase hours for a part-time Parks & Recreation Director
- DPW could share their additional employee to assist Parks & Recreation meet their staffing needs
- Most of the items listed as necessary are items that have been voted down over the last four years
- Insurance costs too high and climbing at an alarming rate—insurance should be capped
- By giving employees a 12% increase in insurance benefits and then another 3% in COLA adjustments, you boost your operating budget by 15%--and

voters see this as a 15% increase in the town employee's pocket. It was recommended that the town take a hard look at the benefits package and start cutting at that level and then perhaps the voters will support a budget that actually reflects a moderate increase. An increase in services, not an increase necessary to keep up with the cost of doing business while retaining outstanding employee benefits at the same time.

- Increase staffing in town clerk's office especially during vacation season
- Motor vehicle registrations growing with the population
- Dog licenses are growing as well
- Vault space shrinking, need for additional archival space
- Need for new desktop equipment, smaller—more compact
- Better office space for health & safety for town office personnel
- Cuts are necessary, town office shut downs, cut backs in town services to accommodate budgetary shortfalls
- Town clerk's office congestion
- New economic development flyers and brochures
- Redesign a economic development brochure to entice businesses into town to stimulate a commercial tax base
- All town department budgets should start at zero, not at the last year's operating budget. All department heads should review each and every line item of their operating budgets—school and town

TOPIC NEXT TIME: What is broke and how do we fix it?

HOMEWORK: Each dept head should write down a few ideas relating to the next meeting.

NEXT SUMMIT: JULY 28, 2004 7 P.M. to 9 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:00 P.M.

A True Record;

Sherry Butt Dunham, *Recording Secretary*